

Death Flies East

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Death Flies East is a 1935 American [mystery film](#) directed by [Phil Rosen](#) and starring [Conrad Nagel](#), [Florence Rice](#) and [Raymond Walburn](#).^[1] The action takes place on an airline flight with a murderer aboard.^[2] The film was an early example of the [aviation "disaster film"](#) genre.^[3]

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Plot [[edit source](#)]

On a transcontinental flight from California to New York, a police detective ([Fred Kelsey](#)), found slumped in his seat is, dead, poisoned. The passengers include Evelyn Vail ([Florence Rice](#)), a nurse on parole for a murder she did not commit. The victim had also died of poisoning. The elderly doctor she worked for is still in prison. Evelyn is attempting to clear her name and bring the real killer to trial, a convict on death row at [Sing Sing](#) who can confess to the killing, if only she can get there in time.

Another passenger is John Robinson Gordon ([Conrad Nagel](#)), a college instructor who becomes involved in Evelyn's plight. He is carrying a secret armament formula to deliver to the [Secretary of the Navy](#) in [Washington, D.C.](#) He protects the valuable secret formula, clutching a briefcase at all times. John begins to suspect Evelyn but other passengers appear suspicious; who, among the other passengers, is the real murderer?

Cast [[edit source](#)]

- [Conrad Nagel](#) as John Robinson Gordon
- [Florence Rice](#) as Evelyn Vail
- [Raymond Walburn](#) as Evans
- [Geneva Mitchell](#) as Helen Gilbert
- [Robert Allen](#) as Baker
- [Oscar Apfel](#) as Wallace P. Burroughs
- Miki Morita as Satu
- [Purnell Pratt](#) as Dr. Landers
- [Irene Franklin](#) as Mrs. Laura Madison
- George Irving as Dr. Jim Moffat
- Adrian Rosley as Pastoli
- [Fred Kelsey](#) as Police Lieutenant O'Brien
- [George "Gabby" Hayes](#) as Wotkins

Production [[edit source](#)]

Principal photography on *Death Flies East* took place from December 27, 1934 to January 15, 1935.^[4] [American Airlines](#) loaned a [Douglas DC-2](#) airliner that was featured in . Interiors and flight-deck scenes, however, were shot in a studio using a [mock-up](#).^{[5][N 1]}

Reception [[edit source](#)]



Aviation historian Michael Paris equated *Death Flies East* as a progenitor of the "disaster film". He wrote, "... the stereotyped collection of passengers, essential in the disaster movie, were first created in the 1930s in films such as *Thirteen Hours by Air* and *Death Flies East*.^[6]

References [[edit source](#)]

Notes [[edit source](#)]

1. [^] The Douglas DC-2-120 s/n 1316 (NC14283) was delivered in December 1934, later sold to [Indian Airlines](#) and eventually used by the [RAF](#) as DG470.^[5]


Citations [[edit source](#)]

- ¹ [^] Parish 1978, p. 270.
- ² [^] [Details](#) "Death Flies East".  [AFI](#) (afi.com). Retrieved: May 21, 2019.
- ³ [^] Pendo 1985, p. 15.
- ⁴ [^] ["Original film information: 'Death Flies East'."](#)  [TCM](#). Retrieved: May 21, 2019.
- ⁵ [^] ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} Beck 2016, p. 73.
- ⁶ [^] Paris 1995, p. 198.

Bibliography [[edit source](#)]

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External links [[edit source](#)]

- *Death Flies East* at IMDb
- *Death Flies East*  at the TCM Movie Database

Categories: [English-language films](#) | [1935 films](#) | [1935 mystery films](#) | [American films](#) | [American aviation films](#) | [American mystery films](#) | [Films directed by Phil Rosen](#) | [Columbia Pictures films](#) | [American black-and-white films](#)



Douglas DC-2

